



**Insurance and Real Estate Committee
February 3, 2009**

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American Cancer Society Testimony

SB 6 – An Act Concerning Prescription Drug Copayments

The American Cancer Society is urging your support of **SB 6 – An Act Concerning Prescription Drug Copayments**.

There are many individuals throughout Connecticut that rely on mail order pharmacies as their source for receiving their medications. In most instances, the individuals that are unable to receive their medications by going to a retail pharmacy are unable to do so because of their physical inability to travel to the pharmacy to obtain them. These individuals rely on mail order delivery because they are unable to drive due to health reasons. Utilizing mail order prescription drugs may be the only way for them to obtain their medication. There should be no reason why copayments for the same medication should be different whether you are picking up your medications or receiving them through the mail.

This issue is of particular concern for cancer patients, for many of these patients the treatments that they receive in the hospital leave them physically weak. Some are lucky to have support from loved ones to help with basic tasks, including picking up their medications, but others are not so lucky. For them, receiving their medication through the mail is the only way that they would receive their drugs.

In many instances a retail pharmacy that charges a \$3 to \$5 copayment for a particular drug would cost \$8 to \$12 for the same drug if it was ordered for mail delivery. For many this seemingly small change in price is too great to afford. As a result, individuals will put off receiving their medication. Too often many seniors who are on a limited income put aside the drugs they need to stay healthy in order to afford food, mortgage or rent.

Cancer is a major public health problem in Connecticut and the United States, and is our nation's second leading cause of death, killing more people every year than every war in the 20th century combined. About 20,000 Connecticut residents are expected to develop cancer in 2009 and more than 7,000 Connecticut residents will die this year from cancer. A majority of cancer incidence affect individuals between the ages of 80-84. For many in this age group, cancer treatments become physically demanding which limits ability to obtain medication directly from a pharmacy.

The American Cancer Society stands ready to work with the legislature in further developing the specifics of this legislation. SB 6 is an important effort that will help ensure that more people are not unfairly charged for their medications.